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CHILD WELFARE

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A STAFF EXAMINATION OF RECORDING SKILL: PART I

Kathryn Bork*

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We are glad to publish this thoughtful and comprehensive description of how one agency's staff improved its case recording through a series of group discussions, and demonstrated that, as the author puts it, "Recording can be fun!"

Editor's Note: *This is the first part of an article to be concluded in the March issue.*

THE problems connected with dictating and recording of case material seem truly perennial, being discussed year after year in all types of social agencies across the country. During the last few years there has been increasing concern about the length of records, both from the professional standpoint of usability and the practical standpoint of the cost of dictation and transcription. Since October, 1950, our agency has been spending considerable time, thought and energy on the subject of recording, with the hope of doing something different than has been our pattern. Now that a year has passed, it seems time to take stock of what has been accomplished and to draw some conclusions about what needs to be done to consolidate the gains we have made.

In this paper I plan to focus on recording as an entity and as a skill in itself. I want to share some of the thinking and the experiences which evolved from staff discussion groups when the subject was approached from this angle. We had two purposes: to supplement further our efforts to improve standards of worker performance through a series of group discussions which would reach every member of the interviewing staff; and to discover what we could do to reduce the wordiness of our records. To date four different staff groups have taken part in this activity at different times, so the method and content of what I shall be presenting has been tested, I believe, to a point beyond that of theory to one of practical use. I know only too well that I have no clear conclusions to offer for an easy or quick guide leading to recording skill. I can only tell what happened when we tried to find a better way of fulfilling one of our agency's vital responsibilities. I believe our findings may be of particular interest to any agency which decides to approach this difficult and far-reaching subject with determination to change long-established habits of both worker and supervisor.

It is extremely difficult to consider content of the group discussions without some attempt to set forth briefly the continuing process of staff development which made these discussions a possibility. Our agency responsibility covers a five-county area, which in itself presents problems of office coverage and travel time. The staff is fairly large and includes workers in all stages of development, from the person new to our function and with limited experience in related agencies, to the professionally trained person with years of experience in Home Service, American Red Cross. It was our opinion that the first series of discussion meetings required of staff as part of their in-service training, should include in each group workers in all stages of development. It was therefore necessary to focus on a phase of recording which would have challenge and meaning to every participant. The desire to have a series of discussion meetings on one subject which would reach the entire interviewing staff had long been an administrative aim. Our conviction was, however, that we had to reach the point of stability in our over-all practice toward which we had been striving, before we could attempt to take this step, particularly if the subject chosen was recording.

For three years prior to undertaking the examination of our recording, we had made constant efforts to develop a qualified and confident staff. Standards of performance were clearly defined for every job classification, and there was sufficient supervisory staff to provide close supervision for every worker on an individual basis. During the three years there had been regular meetings of each unit of workers with its supervisor focusing on our daily work; committees had studied various subjects and activities of interest and value to the agency; participation in one discussion group had been offered at two different times to staff on a voluntary basis; and the experience of one committee was of enough general professional interest to be published.*

* Formerly In-Service Training Supervisor, Home Service, American Red Cross, Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter, Philadelphia, Pa.

* Bork, Kathryn V., "Our Philosophy of the Use of the Social Service Exchange: An Experience in Group Thinking." Philadelphia-Camden Social Service Exchange, Member Series No. 3, March 1950.

Change Would Be Disrupting

All these efforts, in addition to day-by-day supervision, had preceded the recording series. My responsibility for the project was to plan the content for administrative and supervisory consideration and to lead the discussion meetings. I believed any discussion of recording which focused on changing established habits would, if it had real meaning, be a disrupting experience for those involved. There would have to be an unlearning of the old, a discovery of the new. I could see the possibility of regression in casework practice if staff became overly engrossed with recording. It was difficult to wait for three years to begin but we felt rewarded because, by the time it seemed possible to proceed, the subject most often requested by staff was recording. By that time, however, we were faced with decreased funds and increased activity resulting from the Korean situation. Only the strong conviction of the administrative and supervisory staffs of the need for continuous training through group activity made possible the culmination of our plans.

The recording discussion series was the first time participation in group discussion activity was required by the agency and much careful thought went into the planning. The plan finally agreed upon was for four consecutive groups, with approximately eight workers in each, to meet six weeks, for two hours, a total of only 12 hours for each group. Every effort was made to equalize office coverage and travel time as much as possible. The focus of discussion was our own recording practice, not case recording in general, and the definition of our purpose was "to examine Home Service recording in order to develop skill in recording both factual material and movement of casework process with thoughtfulness, selectivity and brevity."

For several weeks before the first meeting I read all the material included in a bibliography later used by the group participants. This material, published between 1920 and November, 1950, represented professional thinking from many sections of the country. I was impressed by the number of articles concerned with the same or closely related problems of recording we were preparing to consider. From this reading I formulated my own basic thinking which I hoped groups could develop for themselves in detail. In addition to reading published material, I read endless records from our current files searching for good teaching material. The impact of reading with recording in mind rather than with the focus of worker-client activity was indeed interesting. Words took on a new importance. They became either the trusty vehicle carrying the meaning of the work being done,

or they became heavy and burdensome, obscuring meaning rather than sharpening it. Individual workers' dictation habits took on a clearly defined pattern, too often repetitious, too often lacking difference.

This process of concentrated reading of case material focusing on recording was an interesting and valuable experience for me. I was impressed by the following practices because they seemed common to so many workers regardless of their stages of development:

1. Repetitious and unnecessary words, such as: that; I said that; he said that; however; I said to her that (in conversation with only one person); also; this; these; those.
2. Minute, lengthy explanations of office "mechanics" such as searching for a record; detailed recording of attempts to reach a client by phone; common courtesies which can be taken for granted. (Both Gordon Hamilton and Ruby Little call this "trivia.")
3. Lengthy descriptions of client when description is seemingly without other significance to record.
4. "Verbatim" recording—the chronological conversation between worker and client; too often each sentence starting with "I said to her that"; "she said to me that."

Among my conclusions were:

1. Awareness of bad habits resulting in use of meaningless repetitions and expressions, and development of thoughtful choice of words would alone result in tremendous recording savings.
2. Exclusions of meaningless descriptions and mechanics, (trivia) would also result in sizable recording savings.
3. "Verbatim" or chronological recording is worker's attempt to do what she believes is process recording. This was my belief and was later tested with the four groups.
4. Above all, if recording is to be shortened without sacrificing content, a way must be found to do it creatively—that is, without imposing one style, or worse, one outline to be followed by everyone. The very nature and essence of casework is creativity; the medium of its expression must be creative. Each individual has a personal style of talking, writing, recording. Help with recording must be directed toward helping each person utilize and improve her own natural style if it is to be productive to either worker or agency.
5. Realistically, length and method of dictation is influenced by agency function, the stage of the worker's development, the worker's manner of expression, the amount of factual material to be covered, the movement of the case. One method of recording, while right for one case, might be cumbersome and tend to defeat our purpose, for another.
6. Experience shows there are many reasons for too lengthy recording. One of the most obvious is that the individual cannot dictate briefly and with selectivity until able to dictate thoughtfully and in detail. In this agency, another reason is that for three years workers have been helped and encouraged to dictate in detail. This was a vital and necessary process, a stage of agency development common, I believe, to all social agencies at one time or another. We need not and should not apologize for nor feel guilty about long records.

But we should do something constructive about development of skills leading to reduction.

7. Recording skill is developed by doing; not alone by discussion.
8. Recording *can* be fun!

Before the first group met, I anticipated the fourth with something of dread, thinking the repetition of the same subject would leave me thoroughly saturated and probably bored. Actually I was just as eager for the fourth group to get started as I had been for the first because each one was so different. Each added to the total thinking; each was challenging in its own way; each was an exciting experience for me. Although there were differences in each group and some changes of content were made as we went along, the same general pattern held throughout, and it is this which I will present in this paper. All thinking was developed by the group; that is, I did not "lecture" and the conclusions reached resulted from the process of thinking together. We used various basic tools to help us focus on recording rather than on casework content. This was not easy to accomplish because the two are parts of one integrated whole. I think the review of the meetings will show that, while casework concepts were a vital and important part of all the work we did, we were able to hold to our focus on recording rather than becoming involved in lengthy discussions on casework. It was a thrilling experience to find, with but one or two exceptions, each worker taking personal responsibility for holding to the defined focus. Over and over again workers refused to pursue an interesting point of casework process, voluntarily disciplining themselves and each other. Two of the tools used seemed to be particularly helpful. One was to read all material from the standpoint of, "Is this difficult to read? If so, why?" The second was to use, for the most part, excerpts rather than an entire interview.

Value in Process as Much as Outcome

I should like to share the agency's experience with the recording series by presenting pertinent content of the meetings and some of the conclusions reached. The year's activity has served to strengthen my conviction that the value of any such effort lies as much in the group process itself as in its final outcome.

The same general pattern was followed in the series of six meetings. Current Home Service records were used for most of the illustrative material; usually there was a contrast between the excerpts, a paragraph illustrating some questionable practice being used in contrast to one illustrating sound practice. Considerable effort was made to find case material which would stimulate thinking about related

phases of recording rather than tend to suggest a definite pattern to be followed in specific instances. I will review the first meetings in some detail and the remainder by summarizing only the most pertinent content. From the beginning there was a fine "give and take" of opinions. Workers submitted examples of recording from their own records. These were analyzed by the others with critical directness and objectivity, but also with a respect for each other's material which provided the finest kind of group support. In almost every meeting we spent some time rewriting case material in an attempt to shorten it without destroying or changing meaning. Many meetings started with a sharing of "recording experiences" during the intervening week. There seemed an air of discovery when workers told of finding certain "pet words" used repeatedly in their dictation. One person told about reducing one of her paragraphs from 216 to 160 words. I cannot remember suggesting counting words, but everyone did it. The expression, "I am amazed at this reduction" came to be a common one. As the work progressed, the meetings became increasingly "doing" groups, or workshops, as well as discussion groups.

For the first meeting I chose two paragraphs taken from case illustrations of the years 1899 and 1909 found in professional literature. These were used with a case illustration from a Home Service record of 1950. The material was distributed following an introduction discussing the overall plan of the training project, the statement of focus and the definition of aim. The differences in both content and style of recording were striking, but there were likenesses, too, regardless of date or function of agency, in the reasons for keeping a permanent record of activity. Each group developed its own thinking about the need and purpose of permanent records. I doubt if any of this was new to the workers, but the process was a reaffirmation, as well as a review, of the vital role fulfilled by case records. It seemed to serve as a reminder that the record is primarily the worker's tool and to make everyone newly aware of its significance and its uses to those beyond worker and supervisor.

It was interesting that none of the individual groups failed to develop, solely from the use of this case material, all the main recording functions listed in the professional literature in the bibliography. The use of this study material served another purpose, I think, as it was fascinating to see the differences in practice and style between 1899 and 1950. This immediately caught the group's interest. It would have been difficult indeed to remain detached when asked to find likeness and difference in these recordings and, at least for the time being, recording was fun!

Workers Listed Own "Pet Phrases"

Following this, we examined the 1950 case record excerpt with the idea of deleting unnecessary words without changing either meaning or content. I had purposely chosen an excerpt which was not too wordy, but neither did it represent highly skilled recording. It seemed a typical example of our dictation practice of that time. Each worker started immediately to keep a list of any unnecessary words or "pet phrases" she found in her own records or became conscious of using habitually in her dictation. The list of useless and/or meaningless words and phrases found in this one case excerpt included: "he had," repeated when not necessary; "all," used several times when once would have served the purpose; "that," repeated without meaning; "I said to him that," used in conversation with only one person; "however." Obviously, these are words and phrases which are generally over-used. It may be questioned what value there could have been in taking time to go through the exercise of deleting words. I believe the results of this exercise, the discussion, and the thinking it aroused may answer the question. One group reduced the total excerpt from 507 to 288 words; another group made such reductions in individual paragraphs as 93 to 51 words and 70 to 22 words. If meaning were changed in the process, the group was vocal in its disapproval. Our purpose was to find ways to say as much in fewer words, not to sacrifice or change meaning. No effort was made to reach uniformity of thinking about how to reduce wordage, since one of our aims was to encourage each worker's recognition of her own style of wordiness and to use from each workshop whatever had individual meaning.

Discussion about the reasons for lengthy recording started in the first meeting. Someone thought it easier to "sit down and dictate without thinking about words." Several said "it is difficult to find time to plan and organize dictation." Many agreed "social workers use a lot of words in conversation." An interesting theory about this last comment was, "We work with human beings, often dealing with parts of their lives which are painful. In an effort to soften the meaning of what we say, we become wordy. This wordiness becomes our way of talking and gets into recording." In one way or another, each group presented the idea, "We often work with clients who are unsure, vague, confused, and this confusion is reflected in our recording." Another worker added "Casework is just about the hardest thing in the world to do; isn't it *good* we are often unsure!" Examination of this thought became one of the very meaningful areas of the series. As soon as workers

started to think about what they were saying, they became aware of the projection and began to accept full responsibility for their own recording skill. As a result, workers started early in the series to think in terms of what they were doing in their own practice. They wondered if the concentrated effort to examine recording practice would not require something very different from them. One group spent considerable time discussing development of one's own style and sharing with each other their experiments in making it as much a habit to dictate without useless words as it can be habit to use them.

At the end of the first meeting case material prepared for the participants was distributed to be considered before the next session. Outside preparation for the next meeting was expected of every worker, as was willingness to submit for group analysis examples of her own work.

Purpose of Describing Client Examined

We spent the second meeting examining first paragraphs of interviews taken from current agency records. My decision to use this material was based on several factors. The first sentence of the first paragraph of any written material always seems to be particularly difficult for me to formulate. From the reading of our records I had become very aware that workers were almost invariably describing the clients. Sometimes the description had definite purpose and relation to the interview; sometimes it seemed to have little purpose and no relation to what followed. I wondered about the validity of descriptions: were they necessary, and if so, how were they being used? If used to "bring the client to life" in the record, and this seemed valid to me, was a lengthy paragraph needed, or was this one spot where we could reduce wordage through selectivity and thoughtfulness? If used for the purpose of identification, was it a help to the next worker? Again, was a long description of any value or was the length the result of thoughtless habit?

For the discussion, I chose the following paragraphs:

"Mrs. Parris, wife of serviceman, in office by appointment. Mrs. Parris was dressed in very loud colors. Her hair, which appeared to be very thick and long, was dressed with a number of twirls and dips which peeped out from under a bright red hat which had a huge white feather in front. She wore a bright red dress, trimmed with gold braid. The color of this dress was in direct contrast to the shade of her hat. Her purse, lipstick and shoes were again three other shades of red. The serviceman's wife was a very attractive woman. She talked about her problems without any apparent difficulty."

"Mrs. Boyer in office for her appointment. She is a young person who speaks in a very soft, low voice, almost as though she is scared. She has light brown hair, brown eyes, rather dark skin. She wore a brown coat, and sat quietly throughout the interview, sort of tucked back into her chair. Her hands, which are large and capable looking, were the only restless things about her."

I had studied both these records carefully and could tell the group members that the Parris description seemed to have no significance in the balance of the interview, since no further mention was made of it. Nothing was said by way of explanation of the Boyer excerpt, but the first lines of the second interview were included:

"Mrs. Boyer in office promptly for her appointment. Today she was wearing lipstick and a little make-up. She looked more energetic and her hands were not so restless."

Each group went directly to the basic questions which should be answered in a first or early paragraph of recording—who, when, where, how, and why, so far as client can present his request. There seemed little need for detailed discussion on these points, but the discussions about description were very thought-provoking. For example, someone said the appearance of the "lady in red" was important to the worker. Almost everyone agreed some workers are very sensitive to color and appearance. The great majority of the discussants had strong conviction about various meanings of color choice. The question was raised whether its significance lay in its effect on worker and what responsibility she had to record her observations. No one questioned the need for description for the purpose of identifying or "personalizing" the client.

Each group was quick to see difference between the two examples, and was just as convinced the Boyer description had meaning as it had question about the Parris one. This feeling about the Boyer excerpt was expressed in various ways:

"It gives a clue to the client's personality and possibly to her problem."

"It describes the client's appearance but also something of behavior and attitude."

"It indicates something of the client's problem and her strength."

"The first excerpt is the worker's reactions to the client's appearance—therefore it is descriptive rather than interpretive; the second describes the *person*, therefore it is interpretive as well as descriptive."

"Description should be functional—it should serve a purpose beyond that of the worker's need."

No Set Rules Laid Down

Throughout the entire series, a determined effort was made to avoid any semblance of formulating rules for recording in the sense that one way is "good"; another "bad." Convinced that this sort of

effort destroys creativity, we tried instead to formulate some basic principle about the recording skills involved in each piece of material studied. The hope was that this group thinking could be used by each worker in her own way and would result in stimulating new ideas which would form a foundation on which skill could grow endlessly.

Some of these basic principles, in the workers' own words, were:

"A beginning paragraph should answer who, when, where, why."

"Early in the narrative there should be something about 'how' the client asks for help."

"A beginning paragraph of an interview should have significance and some connection with what follows."

"Description for description's sake is not a valid use of recording."

"We should aim toward 'creating a person' in a few words, with clarity and recognition of the significant."

I should like to quote two more excerpts from case records used in the second meeting:

"Mrs. Grace Hiller, wife of the serviceman, was in the office at 11 a.m. At first there was some confusion about the appointment because Record Unit seemed to think it was an active case. The . . . Regional Office worker, therefore, was expected to interview Mrs. Hiller. In further checking, it was revealed, however, that although the other case had a similar name, it was a different serviceman. After about twenty or twenty-five minutes delay I interviewed Mrs. Hiller."

"Mrs. Samuels was in the office for her appointment. When I went into the reception room to call her I noticed that she had been crying while sitting there. We went into the interviewing room and Mrs. Samuels sat down, clutching her hands. She suddenly burst out, 'I've got to get my husband home. I can't stand it.' From this point on she told of the situation in the home in a torrent of words. It was with difficulty that she kept control of herself and throughout the interview she was exceedingly tense."

Obviously the second excerpt is not concerned only with "mechanics," as ordinarily detail concerning going from the reception room to the interviewing room is not dictated. Nor is the Hiller example a typical one. I chose them because they seemed good teaching material, illustrating a general principle I hoped groups would think through. As discussion progressed in the first group, we used the term "mechanics" to cover the many incidents which can occur during the interviewing day, and subsequent groups adopted the expression, so that it has come to have a definite meaning to our staff. We asked ourselves when we would want to record this sort of detail and when we would omit it. What would have enough significance to make it a part of a permanent record? Each group recognized that the Hiller material reflected the worker's frustration, showing nothing about the client's reaction to the inconvenience. We thought the meaning of the delay to Mrs. Hiller would have had importance and, therefore,

would have had a part in the recording. On the other hand, there was agreement that the Samuels excerpt concerned the client's behavior and feelings. It had real bearing on the remainder of the interview, had significance, and therefore needed to be a part of the record. In other words, these excerpts were used by each group to start thinking in terms of recording the significant and omitting the trivia. Another word in our definition of aim, "selectivity," started to take on the sort of real meaning which leads to sound conviction.

Skill Depends on Knowing What is Meaningful

As a result of this discussion, workers began saying that while each of us can be alert to words and can take responsibility for avoiding thoughtless use of them, basically recording skill depends upon knowing what is truly meaningful in an interview. While this was an illustration of the thoughtfulness the groups were putting into the discussions, it seemed also to be the first indication of their need to question the examination of recording. I had believed there would have to be considerable negative expression against the series if it had enough meaning to make individuals uncomfortable in their dictation practice through its attack on their established habits. The different ways this negative was expressed by the groups was fascinating and I want to speak about this briefly later in the paper. I also want to raise later, some question about the ease with which we seem to accept so completely the statement that recording skill depends upon knowing what is of significance in the interview.

In two groups, time was spent rewriting the above case record paragraphs, as well as two other illustrative excerpts. Again an attempt was made to include the same content in fewer words and again the results were startling. There were savings of approximately 50 per cent; for example, there were reductions of 650 to 292 words, and 933 to 504 words. As a result of a recommendation of the first group, subsequent groups started in this meeting to submit paragraphs from their own case records for group criticism.

The third meeting was spent discussing what we termed factual content of records. The examples used were portions of two financial assistance interviews. One was a long paragraph written in chronological narrative style. Information concerning the budget and the client's feelings about asking for help were reproduced as they had been expressed in the interview. The other example was a well-organized account of the discussion with necessary figures arranged in columns; this discussion concerned only data not included in the agency budget sheet.

Again the contrast between the two paragraphs was obvious. Workers started to analyze why one was difficult to grasp while the other was so easy. It was interesting to see how much meaning a simple technique like putting figures in a column had to the readers. I think this exercise helped the participants apply directly to themselves what they had said in the first meetings concerning acceptance of full responsibility for their own recording practice. This time anyone who said the disorganized client caused disorganized recording was challenged by the others with real conviction. It seemed to me that the groups had been stating a theoretical concept in the previous meetings; this week, they spoke with the conviction which comes from "self learning."

From experience, every worker who participated knew very well how closely factual information and feelings are intermingled in an interview: they are not organized in neat little paragraphs of conversation! Now we questioned what we had been saying, and tried to discover ways to indicate the feeling tones of interviews while recording informational content in a way which would make it readable and encourage economy of words. Could this be done or would it destroy the feel, the "life" of the interview? While we did not go too far in our thinking about ways to indicate feeling, preparation was made for considering the problem in our next meeting. We accepted the need to organize factual content and agreed on the following:

What happens between worker and client around budget sheet belongs in the narrative; the figures belong on the budget sheet.

Whatever happens in an interview which is not recorded elsewhere, as in correspondence, should be included in the narrative. (This is particularly important to our function because of our large volume of lengthy health-welfare reports, dependency discharge applications, and social-psychiatric histories.)

Editor's Note: This article will be concluded in the March issue.

New Reprints Available

"Group Work With Children in a Medical Setting," by Hyman Weiner, Director, Group Work & Nursery Department, Blythedale Hospital & Rehabilitation Center, N. Y., which appeared in the October 1952 issue of *CHILD WELFARE*, has been reprinted. A limited number of copies are available from the League office at \$.15.

Also available are a small number of reprints of "A New Role for the Social Worker in the Nursery School," by Rosalind M. Sands, Council Child Development Center, N. Y., which was published in the November 1952 issue. The price is \$.25.

A discount of 10 per cent on orders of 10 or more copies will be given, as on all League publications.

THE CHURCH AGENCY AND THE COMMUNITY*

Spencer H. Crookes

Mr. Crookes issues a call for churches and social agencies to work together for higher standards of service for children.

TODAY, in every communion, there is a mounting concern for the well-being and effectiveness and future of church-sponsored social services. Within the past twenty years tax-supported agencies have assumed almost total responsibility for the economic welfare of families in need. Recently and with increasing speed larger numbers of children under direct care of voluntary agencies have been turned over to the public agency. More than we care to admit, this latter trend is a direct result of the financial pressures which are forcing the voluntary agency to offer kinds of service which produce volume at less cost than direct care. Competition for charitable contributions and the failure of contributions to keep pace with a fifty-four-cent dollar have both threatened the capacity of church and nonsectarian agencies to provide care of a quality commensurate with their responsibility and consistent with sound trusteeship for children.

Against such a background discussion the future role of the church agency in the community would appear almost academic. There is, however, much evidence to support the contention that there is growing and marked recognition of the "unqualified importance of religion and of the contribution which religious organizations and forces *are* making and *can* make to the welfare of children and youth."† To take a single example, the recent Midcentury White House Conference stressed to a greater degree than any previous such conference the essential importance of spiritual values and the need to give children full access to religious services and programs.‡

I find myself increasingly impatient with those who decry secularization in social work while elsewhere they steadfastly maintain isolation in the social service community and venture out only for divisive

reasons. In the past there has been reluctance on the part of both religion and social work to join forces, but recently we have heard leaders from both reaffirm the identity of their goals. More and more we are seeing the church agency become "communitarian," to use the term of Reverend Henry Whiting, formerly Executive Director of the Minnesota Lutheran Welfare Society. As he uses it he refers to the role of the church agency as a member of the whole community serving the whole community.

The fact that the average minister today recognizes and uses social agencies indicates one future role for the church organization as the liaison between the clergy and the social welfare agency. Another role is that of helping social workers to integrate the spiritual qualities more effectively in their work. I say future role because I accept as implicit in the divine imperative of the church that it continue to carry its responsibility for the welfare of God's children beyond the simple making of pronouncements, into action and organization for service.

I believe, however, that if the church agency is to have an effective role in the future it is essential that we review decisively and imaginatively our philosophy and policies for service.

Three general policies observed by the church-sponsored child welfare agencies and institutions in the membership of the Child Welfare League of America may be commended to all such agencies operating in the United States of America. These are:

1. Maintenance of standards which permit adequate service.
2. Participation in community planning with agencies under governmental as well as religious or nonsectarian auspices.
3. The development of services in accordance with the particular needs of the community served.

Maintenance of Standards

Earlier in this century, and to some extent even today, church bodies and their philanthropic members have fallen short in these respects. Some of the founders of child care institutions and agencies, whether under religious or nonsectarian influences, have honestly felt that to provide care in itself was a

(Continued on page 14)

* This article is a revised version of the paper delivered by Mr. Crookes at the Episcopal Dinner at the National Conference of Social Work, Chicago, May, 1952. The National Council of the Episcopal Church has reprinted this speech and those of Ralph Barrow, Executive Director of the Church Home Society, Boston, and Wallace E. Conkling, Bishop of Chicago. Copies of the pamphlet are available from The National Council, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at a cost of \$.25.

† Shelby M. Harrison, *Impressions of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth*, Church Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, 1951.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Criminal Neglect of Children—Who is Guilty?

SOME communities still jail neglectful parents as criminally negligent. Misconceptions about the use of authority in casework have persistently placed serious obstacles to the universal application of casework in treating neglectful parents.

How can we go after a parent, hold him to the need to stop and take notice of the neglect, show him that the community disapproves, as do we, of what he has been failing to do for his children, and at the same time help him feel our respect for him as a person and as a parent, and our desire to help him—the basic element in the casework approach. Despite experience to the contrary, many still contend that casework, as a method of helping a person who is aware of a difficulty, with a capacity for dealing with reality, couldn't possibly apply to the parent unable or unwilling to ask for help, and who resists the offer of help, often denying any need, though the evidence is brought to his attention.

And the agency which has services for those who apply voluntarily is apprehensive about how people will feel about coming for help to an agency which may even go so far as to call in the assistance of the court for the protection of children. Upon one point there is unquestioned agreement—neglected children must be protected—but how shall it be done?

It is not our purpose to answer these questions here. They have been answered in publications issued by the Child Welfare League as well as by the U. S. Children's Bureau. And many fine case records testify to a dependable method. Our concern is with what happens where such misconceptions prevail.

Perhaps one of the major problems is the failure to recognize that authority is not synonymous with harshness. Every social agency must act with some authority. An agency must assume authority in deciding whether to give the requested help, in defining what must be expected of the client and what he can expect from the agency. We accept such decisions as being made in the interest of being most helpful, but fail to see that, similarly, a protective agency uses its authority in the interests of helping the parents as well as the children. It asserts the right to inquire into whether and how children are being harmed, and to help the parents explore what they can do to provide their children with the care they need, and offers help to realize agreed upon goals.

Experience has shown that with training and skill, some parents who had very seriously neglected their children were able with help to change their attitude and their conduct and create a good home for their

children and consequently for themselves. Caseworkers must approach with some humility the problem of the parent who cannot take action in behalf of his children. Like the doctor, we may need to recommend the separation of a parent whose condition may make him a menace to the child, but at the same time we must recognize that part of the problem may be our own lack of knowledge and skill in treatment. With such an attitude, not punishment of parents, but help for the child would be the motive.

A social agency's practices must be backed by its community. In some the punitive attitude remains incorporated in the law. In the state of New Jersey, for example, a parent found guilty of neglect is liable to a three years' sentence. To their credit it may be said that both social workers and judges are reluctant to invoke this archaic law. As a result, the court is all too often called on for help only as a last resort, not, as it should be, where the court may arouse parents to the seriousness of the condition in which the children are found, and may participate in deciding the most effective course of action.

Such a law gives a false sense of comfort to those whose lack of understanding of the reasons why parents neglect their children and lack of experience with successful treatment makes them react with anger toward the parents. One probation officer suggested at an open meeting that the practice of imposing a suspended sentence defeats the purpose of the law—to punish the offender and to deter potentially neglectful parents. Is that our purpose? Is it consistent with our mandate that neglected children should be helped to have a good home, and insofar as is possible, a home with their own parents?

Such a law fails also to recognize that it takes two parents to create a home. It permits one parent to charge the other with neglect, when each should assume his share of responsibility when things go wrong. Why has a father blinded himself to his wife's trips to the tavern? Why has a mother stood by helplessly while the father terrorized the children? It overlooks how a child is affected by the sentence imposed on his parents. Children identify themselves with their parents: "If my father is no good, is only a criminal, what good am I?" So the child may lose his parents and lose respect for himself as well. Those who truly want to help children have no choice but to see to it that neglectful parents who have the capacity are given every known help to be good parents.

This service is possible only when an agency accepts the responsibility for administering it, maintains a skilled staff, has the support of an effective juvenile court law, and is supported by the various basic social services for needy parents and children so that neglect may be reduced to a minimum. Where such services are not available, the criminal neglect may well be the guilt of the community.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON

COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR HUMAN SERVICES*

Harry L. Lurie

Executive Director, Counsel of Jewish
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New York, N. Y.

Editor's Note: *In keeping with a plan developed last June to treat as articles reviews of publications which have an out-of-the-ordinary scope and significance, this review is being so treated.*

PLANNING for the more effective organization of our common life has always been a hallmark of civilization which has become more intensive with the increasing complexities of the modern age. Government planning, economic planning, social welfare and health planning, religious and cultural planning, city planning, educational planning, etc., etc.—every field of human society is an opportunity for improved services and for better organization. The aim of planning is generally accepted; there are differences of opinion only on the “how” and the “what.” The completely and rigidly organized socialist state and the less rigid “welfare state” in other countries, the more limited “New Deal” planning in this country against the background philosophy of individual and private enterprise, all of these are attempts to cope with the problems, the inefficiencies, and the complexities of current societies in accordance with the intelligence and the political philosophy of a people.

Bradley Buell and Associates have undertaken the ambitious task of appraising planning for health and welfare services in this country. They have in general not attempted to assess the techniques of community organization, or of how better planning can be achieved, nor have they tried to examine why there has not been more progress. They have instead limited themselves to a presentation of the stage in planning set against the background of our understanding of the nature of the problems with which these agencies deal. Recommendations, however, are offered for a framework in which the social agencies should work together for “a coherent program of community well-being.”

Community Planning includes an over-all statement of the problem of planning in its communal setting (Chapter I), an analysis of the basic purposes, policies, administrative structure and essential aims of pro-

grams in the fields of dependency and economic aid (Chapters II through VI); problems of ill health and medical programs (Chapters VII–XI); problems of maladjustment and the diverse agencies working in this field (Chapters XII–XVI); and recreational needs and agencies (Chapters XVII–XXI). The final chapter (XXII), attempts to relate the findings to the basic organizational aspects of community-wide planning. There is a selected bibliography and a competently prepared index.

The source material on which the writers have drawn includes a study of the current literature, plus the group's professional experience in administration and research in the major fields under consideration. The concepts set forth are credited to the teamwork of the staff members and consultants of the Community Research Associates, Inc., who are engaged in various health and social welfare specializations.

This volume is entitled to a high rating as a compendium of current information on the organization status of the major fields of social welfare. This, however, was not the basic purpose of this volume. Rather the aim was to analyze the social welfare fields for the purpose of creating “the framework of a coherent program of community well-being.” For this objective the authors draw heavily on their St. Paul study and on the previous “social breakdown” studies in Stamford, as basic research for their thesis and recommendations. (Incidentally, the published data on these studies, if existing, are not listed in the selected bibliography.)

It would appear that what the authors consider most valuable are the findings in their original research that “in every community there is a . . . small group of families whose ills are compounded of dependency, maladjustment and disease. They usually receive little organized recreation attention (and) absorb a large part of the time, service, and money expended by assistance, health, and adjustment agencies.”

The authors believe “that there is a very great deal of waste in the totality of agency effort concentrated on this group—furthermore, that agencies tend to disregard the family as the dynamic setting in which these problems have their being” and that “each

* Reprints of this article will be made available should requests warrant ordering them.

program (dependency, health, maladjustment, recreation) is inextricably related to the prevention and control of the denominator common to them all, the breakdown of family competence and self-sufficiency."

On these premises the authors ask for "a greater unity of purpose, better scientific and professional discipline, and more coherent national leadership." More specifically they recommend an experimental development which will assure "early identification" and "systematic recording of data" on the problem families, "integrated diagnosis of the total range of problems which confront each family unit," further research on rehabilitation and periodic "objective evaluation of the continuing agency programs" involved. The authors state that they are unable at this time to suggest which of our various agencies should occupy a pivotal relationship to the program required to deal with maladjustment, since they recognize that "the present trends within the several systems are too obscure." However, they state that "Responsibility for these functions might be lodged with equal logic within the public welfare department or the public health department, or in a community outpost of a well-integrated correctional or mental health system. Or the service might be conducted under private auspices, or under joint sponsorship of some appropriate type."

Profession Recognizes Need for Planning

In evaluating these proposals it can be said at the outset that the current thinking of the profession of social work is in accord to a considerable degree with these and other pertinent statements in this volume. Social work as a profession has continually been imbued with the need for better planning and coordination of programs, more scientific procedures and more effective local and national leadership. The authors, in fact, give testimony to the extent of progress that has been made locally and nationally in the various fields. They rate the health field highest in achieving a comprehensive plan of attack on the problems of disease prevention and control; government programs of aid and social insurance have achieved the most unified structure; agencies dealing with "maladjustment" are the most diffuse and unrelated to each other; the recreational field is still striving to define a rationale grounded in psychological and social concepts.

It is generally accepted that further extensive progress is required. It is, however, exceedingly doubtful that the specific proposals concerning maladjustment and measures for control of the so-called

"multiple problem families" are based upon a sufficiently accurate analysis of the broad and comprehensive tasks of social service, the needs which the agencies are trying to meet and of the actual nature and objectives of organized social welfare.

The term "prevention" is too restricted a concept with which to approach the multiple problems for which social agencies have been organized. Presumably, when a legitimate human need is met, a problem may be obviated. We may also assume theoretically that if all legitimate human needs were immediately and adequately met, we would have fewer people later involved in serious difficulties which are of community-wide concern. The failure of the authors, however, to define "needs" and "problems," and to distinguish between what constitute normal needs and what constitute problem areas for prevention, serves as the most confusing aspect of this volume. Most but not all human problems are preventable by human intervention. Unless we are all mistaken in the belief that physical man is mortal, the end of life for the very aged does not seem to be preventable. Normal needs are not preventable, they can either be fulfilled or overlooked or neglected. The existence of an unfulfilled need is a problem to an individual who has one, and our culture to an increasing extent has tended to make the meeting of many such needs a community responsibility. Voluntary and governmental social agencies have been established for such purposes. Economic aids, social insurance, health services, personal and family adjustment, education and recreation, as well as a host of other civic services such as public housing, sanitation, fire and police protection, may when they function properly prevent some serious problems, but material needs must be met, housing and health services provided for everyone through one means or another, to maintain civilized standards of living.

By using the exclusive approach of social pathology to diverse agencies which deal with non-pathological as well as pathological problems, the authors tend to blur their findings unnecessarily. By putting into one category such diverse problems and needs as economic assistance, dependency, health services, health education, leisure time activities, care for the mentally defective and mentally disturbed, problems of law enforcement and control of anti-social and criminal behavior, divorce, illegitimacy, and other matters, we obtain very questionable data both in the "index of social breakdown" and in studies which the group has made of community organization of social and health services in St. Paul. In that study for example, the authors find that 40 per cent of all the families in the community were being served in a single month by the city's 108 public and private

agencies. A previous study made in Syracuse, N. Y., is referred to where during the year (in 1941) "about 100 community agencies and administrative units had rendered service to approximately 70 per cent of the city's families." Does it not depend upon the nature of the purposes for which these heterogeneous 100 social agencies were established whether we should consider 10 per cent or 70 per cent or 100 per cent as the optimum criterion?

Purpose of Agencies Must Be Considered

In this context what meaning shall we place on the fact that in St. Paul in November, 1948, about 7 per cent of the community's families were dependent, nearly 11,000 had problems of maladjustment, well over 15,000 had problems of ill health and almost 19,000 were being served by public and private recreational agencies? What does it mean that "about 6 per cent of the city's families were suffering from such a compound of serious problems that they were absorbing well over half of the combined services of the community's dependency, health and adjustment agencies?" The authors apparently consider this a serious shortcoming in social planning. But if the social agencies included in the study were largely concerned *by intention* with the difficult areas of dependency, disease and social maladjustment, perhaps it would be better of the 6 per cent group absorbed all or nearly all of their combined efforts. We may believe perhaps that there are too many separate agencies, too unrelated to each other, too lacking in scientific knowledge or professional skills; too many gaps in essential diagnostic or therapeutic services. To substantiate such opinions, however, requires research much more elaborate than one limited to a central index of families served by social agencies and a record of the problems of these families.

To find, as in the St. Paul and the Stamford studies, that a sizable but relatively small proportion of individuals in each community constitute serious social problems because of their long-time dependency, chronic ill health, emotional maladjustment, mental pathology or criminal behavior, and that a considerable part of the work of governmental and voluntary agencies is concentrated on them, that there are chain reactions in families from such problems, or that there is a gain in our understanding of these problems by studying their incidence in a family setting and their effect on standards of family living, adds but little to what we already know. Since these are the recognized serious problems and problem areas, we must expect that social agencies treating them will be concerned with them and will expend

most of their time and money for this group rather than for those who are not dependent or handicapped or defective.

We know that the handicapped, defective, long-time dependent group presents some of the most serious social and health problems. It is, however, doubtful that blanket measures such as the authors suggest are the best approach to the solution of these problems, since these categories are not single or simple entities. Some of the problems are normal and non-preventable. If their underlying problems cannot be solved or their diseases cured, these people, like others in the community, are in need of health, educational, cultural and economic services and social insurances suitable to their requirements and designed to alleviate their conditions. We are not told in these studies what part of the group's problems are related to chronic diseases, old age, untreatable congenital or other handicaps not remediable by our present knowledge, low wages, substandard housing, etc., nor what part of the services are those non-institutional forms of care and service for individuals with serious mental pathology.

We do not now know accurately the incidence or duration of these various conditions, the rate of turnover in the group. We know of some of the limitations in our current efforts in reforming, offenders adjusting the neurotic, defective, and psychotic individuals, finding employment for the partly "unemployable," rehabilitating the physically handicapped. Least of all do we yet know how to prevent effectively delinquency and crime, mental deficiency, mental disease, congenital defects and a host of other social or physical handicaps to which humans are prone? We are therefore not ready to assign the task of coping with the catch-all category of "maladjustment" to some hypothetical central agency. The function of a "clearing house" or research center on the "multiple problem" families in a community (6 per cent in a single month in St. Paul) is a vast undertaking.

Results of New Project Are Awaited

We shall await with interest the results of the new two-year project being conducted in St. Paul by Community Research Associates, Inc., "designed to utilize available services with the maximum of effectiveness and economy." The authors believe that "a disproportionate amount of time and effort is spent upon families discovered too late and for whom the prognosis is bad. In consequence, too little is available for those in whom hopeful elements are more readily discernible." The details of this project are not given, but its aim does not appear to be the

same as that of a central agency taking the leadership and concentrating its attention on the "multiple problem" families.

Most of us agree on the need for and importance of a greater and more comprehensive concern on the part of all sections of our social welfare system with our social problems, better general planning, greater coordination of effort and, above all, more scientific research broadly conceived and carried through. In that connection the research of Bradley Buell and Associates should be accepted as a contribution to our knowledge. Where there is so little effective research on the problems with which social agencies deal, even the inadequately conceived and limited type of study in St. Paul is better than no research at all. Carefully planned research with greater clarity about the underlying concepts and categories would help us to make effective progress toward central planning of the common tasks of social work. If *Community Planning for Human Services* can help to stimulate an effective interest in basic research, it will have made a real contribution.



JUVENILE DELINQUENCY ISSUE OF *The Child*

THE December, 1952, issue of *The Child*, published by the United States Children's Bureau, is devoted to the subject of juvenile delinquency, reported to be seriously on the increase all over the country. An introduction by Dr. Martha M. Eliot, Chief of the Children's Bureau, asks us to consider "What Do We Want For Our Delinquent Children?", and reminds us that services are needed in each community to help the child "find his way back to normal and healthy development." Judge Leo B. Blessing of New Orleans describes the toll of delinquency; the problems of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents, detention, training schools and treatment resources, and the role of the police is also discussed. The facts presented about juvenile delinquency are sobering.

The final article offers recommendations for coping with this social disease. Prevention and treatment are national responsibilities. Child welfare agencies need to examine how delinquency can be prevented, not only by increasing social services to strengthen family life and the bonds between parent and child, but by raising the standards of social concern for all children. Every community should study this issue of *The Child*.

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"good work," and that the good intentions of founders and workers were the most important of all prerequisites. Some have even gone so far as to feel that religious sponsorship should exempt an agency from standards established by the Child Welfare League of America and various state and community bodies. Happily, from the beginning, outstanding leaders in church agencies have been in the forefront of those building ever better standards. The League board of directors and various committees have profited greatly from their leadership and their insistence that church-related agencies should lead the way when it comes to the establishment and fulfillment of standards. They have combined consecration and technical skill in the interests of child welfare. These leaders have long recognized that church agencies must be in the vanguard in providing professional service with fully trained and qualified staffs. An increasing number of the clergy have undertaken graduate training in social work in order to prepare for leadership in church welfare service. They have recognized that the children coming to agency doors today bring behavior and problems that cannot be solved by the old methods and programs however uncomfortable we may be with the new.

Participation in Community Planning

The tendency of church-sponsored agencies toward isolation both in the community and from the field of social service, frequently has denied the latter the unique quality which religion has implicit within its approach to the care of children. Many social workers have not learned to avail themselves of the additional dignity, inner strength, and self-sufficiency with which the child who believes that his God loves him and stands with him can be endowed. There is a need for the church agencies to examine clinically and objectively the special contribution of religious casework as a part of the body of social service method. This is not to say that it is possible to identify totally on a clinical basis the unique strength which religious social casework attains, since a highly personal experience is involved. It is to say, however, that there is serious need to identify those factors and methods by which religious social service can enhance its work with dependent and neglected children. This is a research job necessary to the responsibility which the church agency carries as liaison and training center. We need to identify religious insights with

more than abstract ideas alone, in their application to social casework with children.

In planning church agency services, there is a tendency to view the extension of public programs, particularly in foster care, as the final envelopment of voluntary effort. It is true that certain major responsibilities have been transferred. It is also true that the transfer has been encouraged by those community planners who believe that the future job of the voluntary agency will be mainly in services not involving relief or direct care, but rather those for which recipients can pay in whole or part, or those which represent unfilled needs not yet recognized by the tax-paying public.

Although financial pressures lend credence to the reality of such a forecast, it is true that many indirect and non-rehabilitative services are badly neglected, and our failure to undertake them only adds to our child care loads and compounds our financial troubles. In addition, and this is particularly so of the church agency which has what might be termed a "captive" constituency, there is plenty of reason to assume that money will be forthcoming to support direct care of children with good professional quality when the program is properly and forcefully interpreted.

A recent report published by the Russell Sage Foundation shows that total contributions to voluntary charities, including churches, libraries, museums and the like, comprise two per cent of the national personal income. It further points out that two per cent of national personal income equalled the amount spent annually on tobacco. Of this, the amount spent for child welfare cannot be said to exceed twenty per cent.

It probably is not going to be possible for the voluntary agencies to cover in any community all the various social services required. There is financial reality to that. But it does not follow that the division of responsibility is direct care for the public and indirect or low cost care for the private. I believe that it would be wrong to assume so simple a solution. It is equally wrong to assume that voluntary service should be first quality and public second quality. Both have an important job to do, and if we are to spend public dollars efficiently, their standards must both be good.

There are many kinds of child care programs which need developing and there are many children who are today falling between the service slats. There has been a tendency on the part of church agencies to adhere to traditional types of service, mainly institutional care. Some communions, however, have begun to think realistically about planning their programs

to fill gaps in service to children. I am aware of studies such as that undertaken by the Episcopal Department of Christian Social Relations. I know of others; for example, the report of the Division of Welfare Agencies of the Presbyterian Church approved in May, 1951; and recent moves made by the Methodist Hospitals and Homes.

Community Needs Church Leadership

The development of community planning has been an achievement to which the strongest of church-related agencies have contributed. There have been factors impeding this, however, notably the large number of Protestant communions and their inclination in the old days to develop rather identical statewide programs for care of dependent children. Lack of statewide community planning in most states has left most agencies serving throughout such a jurisdiction more independent than they should be. It is obvious that if every communion in the country developed its own statewide child care service, there would be unwieldy and expensive duplication. There is a strong obligation incumbent on church agencies to promote sound community planning and to participate in it.

Further than this, it is important that church agencies bring to social planning their powerful influence as an educator of public opinion. Church agencies so often sell themselves short in the potential which they have in bringing to the public the serious needs for service of good quality. If church agencies bring to the community's planning table convictions about good standards, programs that reflect those convictions, and a willingness to change in accordance with the needs of the community, they can make a greater contribution than they know toward an orderly advance in social welfare.

The church agencies can bring back also, if they only will, the old concept of charity as *caritas* or love for one's neighbor so badly needed today. It needs to be put into modern dress. It has become unpopular to be a reformer or a "do-gooder" today, and yet to be a "do-gooder" in the best sense of child welfare is simply carrying out those precepts which Christ taught as the basis for Christian living.

THE CASE RECORD EXHIBIT

Has your staff availed itself of the 1952 Case Record Exhibit yet? How has it served them? The Child Welfare League's Information Service would welcome reports of staff reaction.

CONFERENCES—1953-54

Central Regional Conference

March 16, 17, 18
Hotel Deschler-Wallick
Columbus, Ohio
Chairman: Robert B. Canary
Mail address: Division of Social Administration
Department of Public Welfare
Oak Street at Ninth
Columbus 15, Ohio

Southern Regional Conference

April 16, 17, 18
Hermitage Hotel
Nashville, Tennessee
Chairman: Miss Edna Hughes
Mail address: Division of Child Welfare
State Department of Public Welfare
204 State Building
Nashville 3, Tennessee

South Pacific Regional Conference

April 26, 27, 28
Dwinelle Hall, University of California
Berkeley, California
Chairman: Clayton E. Nordstrom
Mail address: Children's Foster Care Services
2206 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland 2, California

North Pacific Regional Conference

April 30, May 1, 2
Olympic Hotel
Seattle, Washington
Chairman: Mrs. John L. Milligan
Mail address: 1535 Summit Avenue
Seattle 22, Washington

New England Regional Conference

May 18, 19
New Ocean House
Swampscott, Massachusetts
Chairman: Lawrence C. Cole
Mail address: Child Welfare Services
State Department of Social Welfare
610 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence 8, Rhode Island

Southwest Regional Conference

June 10, 11, 12
Cosmopolitan Hotel
Denver, Colorado
Chairman: Rothe Hilger
Mail address: Colorado Children's Aid Society
314 14th Street
Denver 2, Colorado

Midwest Regional Conference

Early in 1954
Chicago, Illinois
Chairman: Dr. Roman L. Haremski
Mail address: Child Welfare Division
State Department of Public Welfare
628 East Adams Street
Springfield, Illinois

National Conference of Social Work

May 31-June 5
Cleveland, Ohio
League Headquarters: Hollenden Hotel
League Program Committee Chairman:
Miss Katharine J. Dunn
Children's Division
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of
Cincinnati
Dayton, Ohio

Subcommittee Chairmen:

West Coast: Miss Alice White
San Diego, California
Midwest: Leon H. Richman
Cleveland, Ohio
East Coast: John E. Dula
White Plains, New York

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Setting Up a Fee Scale Formula*

Editor's Note: The Jewish Children's Bureau of Cleveland, Ohio, has recently reevaluated its fee scale for parents with children in full-time placement. We are pleased to publish the following description of the basis on which this was done, prepared by Mrs. Margaret A. Golton, Casework Supervisor of the agency.

THE setting up of fee scales for payment for social services, and the periodic revisions necessitated by changes in general economic conditions, require appraisal of the basic concepts of financial participation, and a reassessment of the economic base on which financial participation is determined. Such appraisal and reassessment constitute a chore which agencies tend to put off, far beyond the point of practicality. The result is that antiquated fee scales remain in force, leaving to the discretion of the individual worker the necessary modifications so that hardship to the family does not result.

The responsibility for individual variations must of necessity remain with the individual worker. It is when the base on which the scale is set up has lost validity due to changes in the cost of living that the worker loses confidence in the tool the agency has provided, though he has no substitute for it. Therefore, he cannot with conviction enforce the fee which he establishes; and his wavering often finds reflection in the parent's attitude toward the fee and the regularity with which he pays it. Also, given a fee scale that realistically reflects the cost of living, the worker

* A 3-page mimeographed fee scale was appended to this report. Copies are being distributed free to League members, provisional and advisory agencies; and may be obtained by non-members from the League office at a cost of 10 cents to cover the cost of mailing.

and the supervisor can identify more readily and accurately other factors that may be operating in parent and/or worker when there is delay or non-payment of the fee established.

There seems to be little quarrel today with the validity of fees for service, both from the point of view of client participation and agency budgets. There also seems to be rather persistent movement in the direction of having the fee in some way related to the cost of the service. Trying to arrive at a basis of fee payment which affords maximum participation on the part of the client and maximum revenue for the agency without hardship for the client, the question of what constitutes hardship or what standards of living the agency recognizes is one of the first and major hurdles.

Family service budgets may be used as a guide but not as a base, because a person who is employed has expenses and responsibilities not carried by the person on relief. Also, there is the factor of incentive. Once having established the minimum budget on which the fee scale is to be based, there is the question of how high a standard of living the agency will subsidize. Here, too, one must reckon with the increased expenses and responsibilities of the higher paid employee and with the factor of incentive. At the same time, one would agree that people in the higher income brackets should carry a proportionately higher share of the cost of the service they are receiving.

In a recent reevaluation of our fee scale for parents with children in full-time placement, we consulted with the budget department of the Jewish Community Federation and a special committee of our board; and we believe we have developed a formula which will make it possible for us to keep our fees more currently up-to-date, without having to recapitulate each tedious step in budget consideration every time a revision is necessary.

This "formula" does require the establishment of certain principles as guides. Our agency believes that fees should be related to the cost of the service. In considering fees for children in full-time placement, however, we must reckon with the fact that so few families can pay the full cost of care including administration, or even the cost of maintenance. Since the majority of our families fall in low income brackets, we had to begin with the cost of caring for a child at home, which has been estimated at \$30 per month.

The first question then was: At what point can a family begin to pay \$30 per month? We learned from the budget consultant of a leading bank that a single individual cannot manage on an income of less than \$130 per month without subsidy. However, a lone parent with a child in placement is not really a single individual. There are the regular visits to the child,

the treats, and the many incalculable extras that go into justifying oneself as a part-time parent. Taking all this into consideration, we established, as the income which a lone adult would require for his own maintenance on a minimal, but not subsistence level, \$140 per month. This meant that a parent could not begin to pay \$30 per month until he had a monthly income of \$170. For the parent earning \$200 or over, it was felt that the maintenance budget should be set at \$150 per month to provide incentive.

Thirty dollars is 17.5 per cent of \$170. With this as a starting point we established a scale, using a \$10 differential for each bracket and increasing the percentage payment by .5 per cent. For example, a parent who earns between \$170-179 pays \$30 per month, or 17.5 per cent of his income, toward the cost of the child's care; one who is in the \$180-189 bracket would pay \$32.40, or 18 per cent of his income. A parent who earns \$420 per month would be expected to pay the full cost of care. The agency has not yet considered, even in principle, having families of higher income brackets pay more than the cost of the service. To date, the economic group we serve does not pose this as a real concern.

Two other matters required consideration: (1) the family group with more than one individual at home; and (2) the family with more than one child in placement. For the second adult, not working, \$40 per month was added to the basic budget; for the second adult, working, \$60 per month; and for each child at home, \$30 per month. Hence, two adults, with only one working, would begin paying the minimum fee of \$30 per month for one child in placement when their income reached \$210 per month; a family with two adults, one working, one child at home and one in placement, would begin paying \$30 per month when their income reached \$240 per month.

In considering situations where there is more than one child in placement, there was, again, the question of how to arrive at a fee structure that would give credence to the service being rendered by the agency without creating hardship for the parent, and without destroying incentive. A lone adult with more than one child in placement would begin to pay \$30 per month at \$170. There could be no extra charge for additional children in placement, because the payment of \$30 leaves the parent only \$140 per month, which, it has been determined, is necessary for his own maintenance. When a parent's income reaches \$180, the fee for one child is \$32.40; for two, \$36.20, and for three, \$38.70. Again, in establishing these fees, the maintenance budget of the parent and "incentive" have been determining factors. The amount for the second child represents one half the difference between the basic budget and the amount

left after the fee for the first child is paid; and the fee for the third child is one third of this difference.

Example:

A parent living alone; three children in placement:

Income.....	\$250-259
Fee for first child.	\$ 53.75 (21.5 per cent)
Balance.....	196.25
Basic budget.....	150.00
	46.25
Fee for 2nd child.	23.12 ($\frac{1}{2}$ of \$46.25)
Fee for 3rd child.	15.42 ($\frac{1}{3}$ " ")
Total fee for three children in placement.....	\$ 92.25 (round figures)
Leaving the parent for his own needs.....	\$167.75

For families whose income does not fall within the income bracket covered by the percentage breakdown, the amount over and above the basic budget would be accepted as a "token payment." For instance, two adults, one working, with one child in

placement and with an income of \$180 per month, would pay \$10 a month, leaving them \$170 per month, the minimum income necessary for two adults when only one is employed.

This type of fee scale, it seems to us, allows for more equitable fee determination, makes possible increases in fees by reduction of the income bracket differentials and/or an increase in the percentage of income required for the fee. The major determinant that would require reevaluation would be the basic budgets of the various family constellations. Use of a basic budget which the agency accepts as valid,* plus the percentage method of calculation, can, we believe, make possible a sounder basis for the establishment of fees.

* Sources of information: In establishing the basic budgets, our board committee consulted the Jewish Family Service Association, the Family Service Association, the County Welfare Department, the Jewish Community Federation, and the budget consultant of one of the leading savings banks.

CLASSIFIED AD SERVICE

New Rates

Classified personnel ads will be inserted at the rate of 10 cents per word; boxed ads at the rate of \$7.50 per inch. The minimum for each insertion is \$2.50. Payment must accompany all orders.

Deadline for acceptance or cancellation of advertising is the eighth of the month prior to the month of publication. Ads will be published in one issue only unless specified otherwise.

Classified ads listing a box number or otherwise not identifying the agency will be accepted, with the stipulation that a statement be enclosed with the ad to the effect that the person presently holding the job is aware of the fact that the ad is being placed.

CASEWORKERS, professionally trained—Openings are expected this winter and spring in a statewide, private, nonsectarian children's agency providing adoption, boarding home, residential treatment services. Excellent supervision, reasonable caseloads, good personnel practices with salary range to \$4560, commensurate with qualifications. Real opportunities for advancement. Student training center. Beautiful city and state with unusual cultural and recreational advantages. For full information regarding agency and community write Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

CASEWORKERS—Immediate openings for two professionally trained workers in developing residential treatment program for emotionally disturbed children. Excellent supervision, psychiatric consultation, carefully controlled caseloads and good personnel practices with current salary range to \$4560. Write C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

CHILD WELFARE WORKER for state-administered public agency. Must have two years' graduate study at an approved school of social work. Direct supervision and reasonable caseload. Four weeks' vacation and sound personnel practices. Salary \$3120-\$3840. Reply to Child Welfare Division, Department of Public Welfare, 1318 Market St., Wilmington, Del.

FLORIDA—Caseworkers, graduates of accredited schools, wanted in statewide expanding adoption agency. Excellent supervision. Salary range \$3000-\$4200. Positions in Miami, Palm Beach and Jacksonville. Write Helen D. Cole, The Children's Home Society, 1649 Osceola St., Jacksonville.

CASEWORK SUPERVISOR, woman, March 15, for small children's agency with multiple program including group care, foster home placement, unmarried parents and adoption service. Member CWLA. Write Executive Director, Woodfield Children's Village, 1899 Stratfield Road, Bridgeport 29, Conn.

CASEWORKERS, Catholic Social Service of San Francisco, multiple service agency, expanding program; professional staff of 52. Good supervision, psychiatric consultation, student training program. Salary \$2904-\$4392 according to training and experience; annual increments. **SUPERVISORS**, openings (1) in Children's Division, (1) in Adoption Unit. Requirements: two years' training and five years' experience. Salary \$3756-\$4872. Write Rt. Rev. Wm. J. Flanagan, 1825 Mission St., San Francisco 3, Cal.

CASEWORKER, trained—Position will be vacant September 1, 1953, in multiple service agency offering family casework, foster care, adoption and child guidance. Starting salary from \$3000 depending on experience. Member FSAA and CWLA. Good personnel practices. Write Miss Eleanor P. Sheldon, Director, Family & Children's Center, 79 Worth St., Stamford, Conn.